

Message Text

SECRET

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, LE, UK
SUBJECT: FCO ON ANGLO-LIBYAN RELATIONS

1. DURING CONSULTATION VISIT OF EAGLETON MAY 30, TOMKYS IN FCO REVIEWED FOR US CURRENT STATE OF ANGLO-LIBYAN RELATIONS. THESE ARE STILL DOMINATED BY THE RELATED ISSUES OF THE FINANCIAL CLAIMS OF LIBYA AGAINST THE UK, INCLUDING THE "UNPAID RENT" FOR THE OLD AIR BASES, AND THE ISSUE OF LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISTS. TOMKYS, WHO HAD VISITED LIBYA LAST MARCH AND TALKED WITH ATRASH IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, SAID THE FCO IS THINKING OF A TWO-FACET APPROACH: ONE WOULD BE A VISIT TO TRIPOLI LATER THIS SUMMER TO REOPEN DISCUSSIONS ON THE FINANCIAL CLAIMS ISSUE, LEAVING THE TROUBLESOME OLD ARMS DEAL CLAIMS UNTIL THE LAST. TOMKYS HIMSELF WOULD PROBABLY PARTICIPATE. THE SECOND WOULD BE A VISIT TO TRIPOLI IN EARLY JULY BY A SENIOR OFFICER OF THE UK MOD DEFENSE SALES ORGANIZATION TO DISCUSS A LIST OF POSSIBLE ARMS SALES.

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2. WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER, TOMKYS STRESSED THAT THE LIBYANS WILL GET NOTHING FROM THE UK WHICH WOULD ALARM THE US ADMINISTRATION. THE ITEMS WOULD BE HARMLESS, AND WOULD INCLUDE NOTHING WHICH WOULD A) BE USED BY TERRORISTS, B) FRIGHTEN THE EGYPTIANS, OR C) BE CONSIDERED SOPHISTICATED. TANK TRANSPORTERS ARE NOT ON THE LIST, BUT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE

EXCLUDED FROM FUTURE LISTS SINCE THE UK HAS SOLD THEM IN THE PAST. HE ADDED THAT WHILE THE LIBYANS HAVE SHOWN NO FURTHER INDICATION THAT THEY WISHED TO PURCHASE A FRIGATE OR JET TRAINERS FROM THE UK OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS THEY HAVE DISCUSSED OR "FLIRTED WITH" A WIDE RANGE OF PURCHASES OF MINOR ARMS SALES, EVEN A MOBILE BAKERY.

3. EAGLETON REVIEWED CURRENT US POLICY TOWARDS LIBYA ON THE TERRORISM ISSUE, ON THE BASIS OF HIS RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON. TOMKYS COMMENTED THAT THE US AND THE UK APPEAR TO HAVE A WIDER GAP BETWEEN THEIR RESPECTIVE POLICIES ON LIBYA THAN ON ANY OTHER ARAB STATE. HOWEVER, THE FCO HAS HAD NO REAL EVIDENCE RECENTLY OF SPECIFIC LIBYAN ASSISTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ACTIVITY (ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH SECURITY SERVICES CONTINUE TO BE INTENSELY CONCERNED OVER WHAT THEY ASSUME TO BE INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY IN THE LIBYAN EMBASSY HERE). THE FCO FEELS THAT IN CERTAIN PARTS OF AFRICA, SUCH AS CHAD, THE SUDAN, AND ETHIOPIA, "CONSTRUCTIVE LIBYAN DIPLOMATIC ACTION CANNOT BE EXCLUDED." UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE BRITISH BELIEVE THAT TRYING TO MAINTAIN THEIR OVERALL DIALOGUE WITH THE LIBYAN REGIME COULD BE USEFUL AND RISKS NOTHING.

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